



State of Connecticut

Office of Consumer Counsel

Mary J. Healey
Consumer Counsel

The Energy and Technology Committee
March 8, 2011

Raised Bill No. 6403, AAC Utility Termination for Households with a Member Less than Twenty-Four Months Old

Testimony of Mary J. Healey, Consumer Counsel
Presented by Joseph Rosenthal, Principal Attorney

The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) has carefully reviewed Raised Bill No. 6403, *An Act Concerning Utility Termination for Households with a Member Less than Twenty-Four Months Old*, and supports the bill.

This bill would extend the existing November 1-May 1 moratorium on termination of utility service to customers with a demonstrated financial hardship to October 1–June 1 for customers who have a child under two years old.

There was ample testimony before this committee last year from doctors and child advocates demonstrating that infants have unique problems with thermal regulation of their bodies. OCC also notes that October and May can be cold months, that as recently as 2009 we had snow in Connecticut on October 15, that the first frost occurs along the shoreline on October 19th and occurs prior to that in areas north of the shoreline, according to the CT DEP website (<http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2688&q=322366#October>). Here in Hartford the average low on a May day is 47 degrees (<http://countrystudies.us/united-states/weather/connecticut/hartford.htm>), and of course a cold day in early May can be significantly colder than that average.

Termination of utility service causes families to go without heat or to take risky actions to heat their homes. While a child of a robust age or an adult might be able to deal with a temperature of 50 degrees or less inside a home for a day or two without getting seriously ill, the ability of an infant to do that is limited. To avoid illness or a potential tragedy, OCC recommends that this proposed minor extension to an existing consumer protection should pass.